

Table 121-05(1):
Objectives and Strategies for Rhode Island's Future Land Use

Acronyms for
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Lead Agency Legend	
Abbreviations	Agencies
CRMC	Coastal Resources Management Council
DEM	Department of Environmental Management
DOA	Department of Administration
DOH	Department of Health
DOT	Department of Transportation
EDC	Economic Development Corporation
GA	General Assembly
GOV	Governor
GSRI	Grow Smart RI
HRC	Housing Resources Commission
M	Municipalities
RIAPA	RI American Planning Association
RIH	RI Housing
RIPEC	RI Public Expenditure Council
RIPTA	RI Public Transit Authority
RC	Rivers Council
SPCOM	State Properties Committee
SPP	Statewide Planning Program
WRB	Water Resources Board
WS	Water Suppliers

Timeline Definitions		
Term Length	Abbreviations	Definitions
Short Term	ST	0 - 5 Years
Long Term	LT	6 - 10 Years
On-going	O	On-going

Categories
Sustainable RI
Greenspace System
Community Design
Infrastructure
Implementation

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A Sustainable Rhode Island			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Goal	I.	A sustainable Rhode Island that is beautiful, diverse, connected, and compact with a distinct quality of place in our urban and rural centers, an abundance of natural resources, and a vibrant sustainable economy.		
Objective	A.	<i>Focus growth within the urban services boundary and in centers of different sizes and types; support traditional centers over new development.</i>		
Strategies	1	Prioritize state investments to support growth within the urban services boundary and in state approved growth centers.	M/SPP/GOV	LT/O
	2	Identify the most important or viable existing centers within Rhode Island, and the character and activities of each center.	M/SPP	ST
	3	Scrutinize the undeveloped areas currently planned for commercial, industrial, and mixed uses and consider their viability as new centers, to provide for major new land use needs, particularly multi-family housing and community facilities. Convene stakeholders to assess the impacts of increased density upon the environment and existing infrastructure capacity.	DEM/WRB/GSRI/M	ST
	4	Promote the preparation and adoption of strategic plans for growth center redevelopment as recommended by the Governor's Growth Planning Council and as provided for in the Handbook on the Local Comprehensive Plan.	M/SPP	ST
	5	Coordinate state and municipal efforts to contain sprawl by limiting growth outside the urban services boundary or approved growth centers. Investigate opportunities to promote greater use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and similar land management techniques, and provide technical assistance to municipalities on the establishment and operation of such programs.	M/SPP/GSRI	ST
	6	Utilize transfer of development rights programs, conservation development and similar techniques to focus future growth within areas identified in this plan as having the fewest environmental constraints and most public services.	M/SPP	ST
Objective	B.	<i>Support regional and watershed-wide planning to coordinate policy development and promote cooperative implementation of plans, programs, and projects affecting more than one community.</i>		
Strategies	1	Establish and maintain a statewide system for the provision of water supply availability information to state, regional, and municipal entities for sustainable current and future uses.	WRB / WS	ST/O
	2	Land use planning shall consider the capacity of water sources and water availability within watershed basins and/or sub-basins in establishing land intensity goals and regulations.	WRB/SPP/M	ST/O
	3	Consider geology and hydrology, as well as soil suitability in establishing appropriate land uses and intensities.	WRB/SPP/M	ST/O
	4	Relate development intensity to water requirements, use priorities, source, and type of existing and proposed infrastructure.	WRB/SPP/M	ST/O
Objective	C.	<i>Promote holistic systems planning approaches at the watershed level.</i>		
Strategies	1	Support the participation of watershed organizations in land use planning and management decisions.	DEM/WRB/SPP/M/RC	ST/O
	2	Encourage the integration of Special Area Management Plans (SAMP) for the Bay and other coastal areas with state, regional, and municipal land use planning and management.	CRMC/SPP/M	ST/O

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The Greenspace System			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Goal	I.	A statewide network of greenspaces and greenways that protects and preserves the environment, wildlife habitats, natural resources, scenic landscapes, provides recreation, and shapes urban growth.		
Objective	A.	<i>Permanently protect critical natural resources.</i>		
Strategies	1	Identify and prioritize the most critical Greenspace resources, rural and urban.	M/DEM/WRB/DOH/CRMC/SPP	ST
	2	Aggressively pursue protection of identified critical natural resource areas.	M/DEM/CRMC	LT
	3	Protect existing open space from conversion to other uses.	M/DEM/CRMC/DOT/SPCOM	O
	4	Establish a permanent system for funding and for technical assistance for Greenspace protection.	GOV/GA/DEM	ST
	5	Develop and maintain a Statewide Future Greenspace Network Map.	DEM/SPP/M	O
	6	Support agricultural uses and viability and preserve farmland for active agricultural uses.	DEM/M	ST/O
Objective	B.	<i>Upgrade and maintain urban and community Greenspace.</i>		
Strategies	1	Require significant native or drought-tolerant landscaping in all publicly-funded projects.	M/DOT/SPCOM	O
	2	Upgrade landscape requirements in municipal development regulations.	M	O
	3	Enhance community and regional Greenspace connections during the municipal development review process.	M	O
	4	Maintain adequate vegetated buffers wherever possible and/or provide landscape treatments to effectively buffer all highways, roads, and streets.	M/DOT	O
Objective	C.	<i>Provide a diverse, well-balanced system of public outdoor recreation facilities.</i>		
Strategies	1	Preserve and expand opportunities for public access to natural resources and recreation facilities.	M/DEM/CRMC	LT/O
	2	Maintain and expand the state and local network of trails and pedestrian paths, in natural and built areas.	M/DEM/CRMC/DOT	LT/O
	3	Strengthen and expand community-based opportunities for open space and outdoor recreation, particularly in urban areas.	M/DEM	LT/O
Objective	D.	<i>Use Greenspace to shape urban development patterns.</i>	M/DEM	LT/O
Strategies	1	Coordinate state land protection priorities with community comprehensive plans	SPP	O
Objective	E.	<i>Shoreline areas will compose a significant portion of the Greenspace system.</i>		
Strategies	1	Strengthen and implement land use controls to protect shoreline areas.	M/CRMC	ST
	2	Prioritize shoreline areas in state and local land acquisition efforts.	DEM	ST

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Community Design			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Goal	I.	Excellence in community design: communities that are quality, energy efficient, safe and healthful, distinct, diverse, and aesthetically pleasing communities that are rich in natural, historical, cultural, and recreational resources; communities that provide abundant economic opportunities.		
Objective	A.	<i>A majority of the state's residents will have the opportunity to live in traditional neighborhoods, near growth centers. (Note: Traditional neighborhoods are generally residential areas with a mixture of housing types, with public water and sewer service, sidewalk and transit connections and house lots of one-half acre or less.)</i>		
Strategies	1	Prepare and adopt neighborhood-based strategic plans to accomplish revitalization, redevelopment, and development of new neighborhoods.	M / HRC	ST
	2	Identify existing traditional residential neighborhoods and accessory uses such as shopping, open space areas, and transit connections.	M	ST
	3	Identify areas suitable for new traditional residential neighborhoods within the state's public water service areas, adjacent to centers and other residential neighborhoods, or adjacent to rural village centers.	M/WRB	ST
	4	Promote infill and redevelopment with supporting amenities and services within existing neighborhoods in areas which are underutilized or where larger replacement structures would be appropriate.	M	LT/O
Objective	B.	<i>Preserve and enhance special districts and special places, supporting particular uses and resources.</i>		
Strategies	1	Identify special districts or special places, and define their character, functions, and contributing features.	M	ST
	2	Evaluate the extent to which existing land use plans, regulations, and capital improvement projects provide for preservation and improvements to the special district.	M	ST
	3	Promote the preparation and adoption of Special District Improvement Plans and revise land use regulations to be consistent with the plans.	M/EDC	ST
Objective	C.	<i>Maintain and protect the rural character of various areas of the State.</i>		
Strategies	1	Identify existing rural centers, villages, mill complexes, and special districts; define their character, contributing elements, and active uses.	M	ST
	2	Evaluate assets and constraints and the extent to which the existing centers contain potential sites for new development within or adjacent to the centers.	M	ST
	3	Enable and Promote clustering of new development into much denser concentrations and adjacent to existing rural centers or existing neighborhoods.	M	ST
	4	Protect the character of rural roads, areas, and important vistas through land use controls, such as deep frontage setbacks and configuration of open space in new developments.	M	ST
	5	Develop and apply zoning techniques appropriate for conservation of fragile or important resources.	M	ST
	6	Develop plans for existing undeveloped areas as future neighborhoods or centers or reserves. Revise land use regulations to be consistent with the plans.	M	LT
	7	Locate small-scaled convenience shopping uses, as well as community and institutional facilities within or adjacent to rural centers. Ensure that zoning requirements for such uses/areas provide designs that are compatible with the scale and character of rural environments.	M	O

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Community Design			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Objective	D.	<i>Provide a diverse, affordable housing stock.</i>		
Strategies	1	Preserve the existing affordable housing stock, both publicly subsidized and market units.	HRC/RIH/M	O
	2	Identify good potential sites for higher density housing, considering capacity for water and sewer service as well as transit connections and employment centers. Adopt guidelines for development of higher density housing uses, particularly near identified centers, which respect the carrying capacity of the land and community context.	HRC/SPP/M	ST
	3	Provide examples of high-density residential development that complements community design standards.	HRC	ST
Objective	E.	<i>Focus development within the urban services boundary and designated growth centers</i>		
Strategies	1	Maintain a current inventory of industrial and commercial space that serves to maximize the employment and public investment in existing major employment centers.	EDC	O
	2	Provide incentives such as financing and tax sharing for regional development of major new industrial centers.	EDC	O
Objective	F.	<i>Ensure that public facilities and properties exemplify best practices of community design</i>		
Strategies	1	Upgrade existing state and municipal facilities in terms of functionality and community design. Public facilities should be well-designed, well-maintained, and well-landscaped to serve as landmarks and anchors within the communities and centers where	M/SPCOM	O
	2	Maximize the potential of existing public buildings and properties through optimum use, good maintenance, and creative re-use.	M/SPCOM	O
	3	Develop special district plans for each state reservation, including government centers, universities, and major employment centers. Plans should include use, re-use, and development of buildings, as well as design guidelines for built and natural features. Coordinate with the host municipality to foster compatibility with land use plans and regulations for areas surrounding state reservations.	SPCOM/M	ST
Objective	G.	<i>Increase energy efficiency through building design and location</i>		
Strategies	1	Locate new public facilities, in or near to urban or rural centers, and insure good transit and pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods.	SPCOM/DOA	O
	2	Incorporate LEEDS "greenbuilding" techniques in new construction and rehabilitation wherever possible.	M/SPCOM	O
	3	Maximize infill and redevelopment in areas that are underutilized or where larger replacement structures would be appropriate.	M/SPCOM	O

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Infrastructure			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Goal	I.	First class supporting infrastructure that protects the public's health, safety, and welfare, fosters economic well-being, preserves and enhances envoronmental quality, and reinforces the distinction between urban and rural areas.		
Objective	A.	Maintain fully functional water and sewer systems; focus development to maximize the investment and capacity of these community assets.		
Strategies	1	Evaluate the capacity of the existing systems and natural resources to serve the planned build-out of the State.	WRB/DEM/M/SPP	ST
	2	Identify and correct problems within the existing systems. Install all emergency connections and finalize all emergency agreements.	WRB/DEM/M/WS	LT
	3	Identify where capacity exists for greater development intensity than currently planned for; evaluate capacity for the systems to serve new development, major rehabilitation projects and proposed centers.	WRB/DEM/M/WS	ST
	4	Upgrade and repair systems to serve the major planned redevelopment in urban areas, both rehabilitation and new developments.	WRB/DEM/M/WS	LT
	5	Identify parts of existing service areas where upgrades of the water and sewer system is unfeasible or unsuitable and direct major development away from these areas. Revise land use plans and regulations accordingly.	WRB/DEM/CRMC/M/WS	ST
	6	Establish overall water availability for watersheds as determined by water resource agency data and studies.	WRB	LT
Objective	B.	Protect drinking water supply resources.		
Strategies	1	Acquire control of and protect key resource areas in proximity to reservoirs, wellheads and aquifers supplying public drinking water, to protect both existing water systems and planned expansions for future supply.	WRB/DEM/DOH/M/WS	ST/LT
	2	Revise land use plans and regulations-to prohibit inappropriat development in locations that could degrade drinking water quality.	WRB/DEM/DOH/M	ST
	3	In the non-urban areas of the State, maintain the quality of the drinking water supply to rural centers, major uses, and concentrated clusters through a well-controlled system of community wells and small, well-designed public water systems. Limit the expansion of such systems to areas planned as higher density development centers to avoid sprawl.	WRB/DEM/DOH/M	O
Objective	C.	Utilize infrastructure to avoid or mitigate significant negative environmental impacts from development.		
Strategies	1	Ensure that wastewater collection and treatment systems and facilities are properly maintained, operated, and upgraded or expanded in accordance with community plans; in order to reduce water quality impacts and accommodate desired focused growth within urban areas.	DEM/M	O
	2	In rural areas lacking public systems, ensure that wastewater management and land use policies are coordinated and mutually supportive. State of the art on-site treatment technologies should be employed to facilitate focused growth within centers and other areas designated by community plans for higher intensity development. Limit the proliferation of advanced treatment systems (and development) in areas designated in community plans for preservation or open space.	DEM/M	O
	3	In areas without public wastewater treatment systems, ensure that wastewater is properly managed to protect and enhance water resources. Provide for the phase-out of existing cesspools and replacement with current technology, on-site systems, with priority for sensitive water resource areas.	DEM/WRB/M	O
	4	Focus development in higher density, mixed use centers served by transit and sidewalks to reduce the need for driving and help attain the state's air quality goals (reduction of greenhouse gases and other automotive emissions).	DEM/M	O
Objective	D.	Locate new infrastructure in appropriate areas.		
Strategies	1	Identify and map priority areas for extension of public water and sewer service in order to support major economic development and concentrations of related uses in those centers with the most potential.	WRB/DEM/M	ST
	2	Identify and map the priority areas for extension of public water and sewer service in order to support development of traditional residential neighborhoods and development of larger-scaled residential developments.	WRB/DEM/M	ST

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Infrastructure			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Objective	E.	<i>Promote intermodal centers and greater reliance on transit.</i>		
Strategies	1	Upgrade and maintain the 14 existing multi-modal terminals in the State with an aim of serving many more travelers. Plan and develop new multi-modal stations, particularly new and restored rail stations, to serve future demand. Plan for land use (transit oriented development) surrounding terminals and their auxiliary uses, to support the mass transportation use. Revise plans and regulations accordingly.	DOT/RIPTA/M	LT
	2	Support an effective, efficient intermodal transportation system connecting centers by providing transit-supportive features including extensive, connecting sidewalk and pathway networks, commuter parking, bus, taxi, and bicycle facilities.	DOT/M	LT/O
Objective	F.	<i>Provide pedestrian connections through all centers and urban districts.</i>		
Strategies	1	Require sidewalks in new development in all urban centers and neighborhoods. Particularly around schools, in commercial and mixed use districts, ensure safe pedestrian connections and discourage combinations of land uses or design features that cause pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.	M/DOT	O
	2	Construct infill sidewalks and pedestrian connections through capital improvement programs and during roadway or streetscape projects.	M/DOT	O
	3	Reduce the isolation of existing neighborhoods and facilities through enhanced pedestrian improvements in the form of sidewalks, traffic controls, and crosswalks.	M/DOT	O
	4	Discourage cul-de-sac street patterns in favor of interconnected streets that encourage walking.	M	O
Objective	G.	<i>Maintain the functional integrity of existing and planned roadways.</i>		
Strategies	1	Develop detailed, multi-community corridor plans particularly along state and interstate highways and around major intersections. Coordinate transportation and land use planning techniques and controls to upgrade and protect the character of the corridors.	SPP/M/DOT	ST
	2	Coordinate transportation and land use planning efforts in access management. Revise municipal land use regulations and state permitting procedures accordingly.	M/DOT/SPP	LT
	3	Evaluate the opportunities and issues presented by highway interchange areas and coordinate planning efforts to maximize economic benefits of the existing infrastructure and to promote uses that are complementary to the municipalities and the region. Minimize sprawl and environmental impacts of interchange development through land use controls.	M/DOT/EDC/SPP	ST
	4	Protect the character and quality of scenic roadways through coordination of municipal land use controls for areas adjacent to the roadways and state transportation planning for areas within the right-of-way.	M/DOT/SPP	ST
	5	Use land use plans and regulations to support ride-sharing, commuter parking, and mass transit in order to encourage alternatives to single occupant per vehicle commuting in all major developments and centers.	M/DOT/SPP	ST
	6	Restrict land uses that exacerbate traffic congestion and conflict. Separate land uses with different traffic and pedestrian characteristics. Control new development through municipal land use regulations to ensure compatibility of land use with transportation capacity and functions of roadways servicing it. Mitigate the transportation impacts of existing development through municipal planning and public improvement projects.	M/DOT/SPP	LT

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Implementation			Lead Agencies	Time Line
Goal	I.	Implement and maintain the vision. Continue to support public stewardship for land use through strategic public investments in growth centers, land conservation, development, and enhanced planning capacity at the local and regional		
Objective	A.	<i>Reform Rhode Island's property tax system in a manner that support the goals and objectives of this plan.</i>		
Strategies	1	Participate in efforts to reform the existing Rhode Island property tax system, stressing it's negative impact on the land use decision making process.	GOV/GA/SPP/DOA/RIPEC/GSRI	ST
Objective	B	<i>All municipalities will maintain clear and current land use plans, and coordinated regulations to attain land use goals on a statewide, regional, and community level.</i>		
Strategies	1	Enhance the state and municipal comprehensive planning system's ability to coordinate and clarify the land use plans, projects and regulations of the state agencies with those of the municipalities.	SPP/M	O
Objective	C.	<i>Develop and maintain excellent land use information and technology systems.</i>		
Strategies	1	Upgrade and maintain the Rhode Island Geographic Information System (RIGIS) as a centralized statewide database for all aspects of land use and water data and mapping.	DOA/SPP/WRB	O
	2	Upgrade the state and community information bases and technology systems to contain all pertinent land use data and to establish and maintain the capacity for effective information sharing.	DOA/M	O
	3	Promote establishment of electronic data and mapping systems at the state and community level and the transfer of all pertinent land use information to electronic systems.	DOA/M	ST
	4	Aim for parcel-based land use and water data for the entire state and all municipalities, to be shared through the RIGIS system.	DOA/M/WRB	ST
	5	Ensure that all state agencies and municipalities maintain current, mapped data identifying the areas and zones to which their regulations apply.	DOA/M	O
	6	Update state land use data every five years.	DOA/SPP/DEM	O
Objective	D.	<i>Ensure that state and municipal planning officials are well-trained and properly supported.</i>		
Strategies	1	Develop and maintain the professional capacity of state and municipal agencies with responsibility for land use planning, development, administration, zoning enforcement and building inspection, resource conservation, engineering, and public works.	DOA/SPP/RIAPA/GSRI/WRB	O
	2	Develop and maintain the technical capacity of citizen planning.	SPP/RIAPA/GSRI	O
Objective	E.	<i>Rhode Island's planning enabling legislation will be the contemporary and responsive foundation for state and municipal land management decisions.</i>		
Strategies	1	Engage stakeholders in a thorough review and evaluation of the "Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act" and update, as necessary, to address such areas as electronic data and mapping, required elements, amendment procedures and required updates.	SPP/RIAPA/M	ST
	2	Evaluate the currency and effectiveness of the existing state enabling legislation for redevelopment and, where needed, recommend revisions to facilitate redevelopment and urban revitalization efforts.	SPP/RIAPA/M	ST
	3	Revisit the concept of "Projects of Regional Significance" and assess efficacy of establishing a process that provides for meaningful input by State and regional interests on major development projects that have impacts beyond those managed by local decision-making processes.	SPP/RIAPA/M	ST
Objective	F.	<i>Achieve greater integration of state and municipal planning systems and support regional efforts.</i>		
Strategies	1	Update and revise requirements and review procedures for Community Comprehensive Plans. Plans should include maps illustrating existing and proposed future conditions for greenspace, community development and revitalization, infrastructure, and zoning/land use regulations. Consider requiring updated and extended community plans every ten years.	SPP/RIAPA/M	ST
	2	Evaluate, consolidate, simplify, and strengthen the State Guide Plan system to facilitate coordination among state agencies and the municipalities under direction of the State Planning Council.	SPP/M	ST
	3	Promote information-sharing and coordination of state agency plans and projects which pertain to land use, under the direction of the State Planning Council.	SPP/DEM/DOT/CRMC/WRB/HRC	O